

CTV-06-1, Comments



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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AUG 21 2006

TELEVISION DIVISION

James A. Barry, Chairman
Ronald E. Aponte Alfred J. Roccanti
Michael J. Reardon Gerald A. Grasso

August 7, 2006

Ms. Andrea Nixon, Clerk
Cable Television Division
One South Street
Boston, MA 02110

RE: CTV-06-01

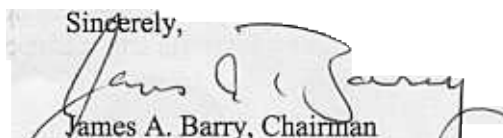
Dear Ms. Nixon:

The Belchertown Board of Selectmen is writing in opposition to the Verizon Petition for a 90-day contract timeline. We oppose their position for the following reasons:

1. 90 days is not sufficient time to negotiate a contract that affects the entire town of Belchertown. We are an elected board but do not work full time for the town and our Telecommunication Advisory Committee is composed of volunteers. 90 days is not sufficient time for them to meet, hold public meetings, report back to us, and then allow us time to review their findings, and determine our course of action. The 90 day timeline proposed by Verizon assumes a paid town professional spending full time negotiating with a paid Verizon professional – Belchertown does not have that resource.
2. The current timetable works. It gives all parties time to gather necessary information, review that information, arrive at a decision that protects the rights of the citizens of Belchertown and protects our public ways over which Verizon would hang their wires.
3. Cable TV may seem to be a business to Verizon but it has a large “in the public trust” component – PEG’s. PEG’s have proven invaluable at bringing town government to the citizens of Belchertown. PEG’s have opened up our governmental procedures, made the public aware of what we are doing, and frankly made our committee meetings more open and more transparent to our citizens. Anything that endangers that, or changes how PEG’s are part of the Cable TV system would demand a long and thoughtful review. We do not believe the Verizon proposed change allows for that kind of thoughtful process.

Thanks you for your attention to our letter.

Sincerely,


James A. Barry, Chairman
Belchertown Board of Selectmen